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**19 September 2023**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Minister Pala Reaffirms Government's Commitment To Re-Starting Porgera Mine**

The National Government is committed to ensuring that the Porgera Mining Project commences operations before the end of this year.

Mining Minister Hon Sir Ano Pala, said this in response to Post Courier's front page story on Monday 18 September 2023. The article ran with the headline "Empty Promises", relating to the re-opening of the Porgera Mine.

He said the government was in fact almost ready to grant the Special Mining Lease (SML) on 16 September, signaling the re-start of the mine. However, he said in the weeks leading up to that date, the Mining Advisory Council (MAC) identified a few technical issues that the applicant New Porgera Limited (NPL), needed to address in their application. He said the issues were flagged with NPL, adding that the MAC had received a response from NPL.

The MAC will deliberate on the response from NPL immediately.

"We want the project to re-open as soon as possible. This is because of the expected boost to the country's economy. However, as a responsible government, we must make sure that all regulatory requirements are met, and all laws of the land are complied with," said the Minister. He said the government was not too far off, on its planned date to re-starting the mine."

He said he would be making a submission to cabinet at the end of this month to have the SML granted.

Meanwhile Acting Managing Director of the Mineral Resources Authority (MRA) Jerry Garry, said the MRA and its line agencies, had been conducting two separate but related processes in parallel. They are the regulatory aspect of the project, and the Community Development Agreement (CDA) initial consultations. He said on the regulatory front, which is basically the assessment of the SML application by NPL, the MAC met two weeks ago to deliberate on the application. This was when they found the issues with the application.

Mr Garry said on the CDA front, landowners and stakeholders had submitted their position papers to the State. A State team is currently going through the position papers to incorporate them into a matrix in preparation for the actual negotiations. The negotiations will begin in about two weeks from now.

The AMD explained that the two processes were separate and were running parallel to each other. This means that the SML could be granted ahead of the completion of CDA process, meaning the mine could start operating once the SML is granted. He said the CDA process would continue as the mine operates.



***Photo: Minister Pala.***